

Dear London Skålleagues and friends,



A very brief history of Christmas

Many of our Christmas traditions were celebrated centuries before Christ was born. Giving gifts, the Yule log, carol singing, church processions and the 12 days of Christmas can all be traced back to the early Mesopotamians.

Early Europeans believed in evil spirits and as the dark days of winter approached, special rituals and celebrations were held to drive out evil and welcome back the sun. During winter in Scandinavia the sun would disappear for many days. When it returned a Yuletide celebration was held and a special feast served around a burning Yule log fire.

Some theories claim that the Christmas celebration was invented by the Christians to compete against the pagan December celebrations. Eventually the church succeeded in integrating some of the merriment, lights and gifts from the Saturnalia festival into Christmas celebrations.

The Celtic culture of the British Isles revered all green plants, particularly mistletoe and holly. These were important symbols of fertility and used for decorating homes and altars.

The exact day of Christ's birth is not known. Traditions say that it was celebrated as early 98 AD.

The earliest English reference to 25 December as Christmas Day dates from 1043.

Christmas celebrations have always been controversial as many of the festive traditions have their roots in paganism. Frivolity and feasting, the giving of gifts and frequent excesses have always been in complete contrast to the simplicity of the Nativity and are often condemned as contrary to the true spirit of Christmas.

Although not the original purpose of the day, Christmas remains a traditional time for families to meet, enjoy a meal, and make merry.

Wherever you are and however you choose to celebrate, President Paul and all members of the Board wish all our SKÅL LONDON members, family and friends the warmest greetings, a very happy Christmas and a peaceful, healthy and prosperous New Year'.

We look forward to seeing as many members and colleagues as possible at the AGM and throughout our year of activities during 2015.

Mats Wivesson, Secretary

➡COMING EVENTS: (check all events on our website www.skallondon.co.uk)

SKÅL LONDON AGM,

Wednesday 28th January 2015 @ 18.00hrs

The Hampton by Hilton Hotel, 157 Waterloo Road, London, SE1 8XA

The AGM will be followed by drinks and canapés.

The AGM (free of charge) & drinks/canapés (£15:00 per person) can be booked separately.

Please attend! We want to hear your suggestion on how to take Skål London forward!

SKÅL LONDON - NETWORKING EVENING

Wednesday, 4th February 2015 at 18.00hrs onwards

Networking evening when new members meet "old" members.

The Star Tavern, 6 Belgrave Mews West, Belgravia, London SW1X 8HT

Underground: Knightsbridge Station (10 minutes walk)

Drinks (2 each) and nibbles during the evening

Cost: £12:50 per person

SKÅL LONDON - 80th ANNIVERSARY

Friday, 27 March 2015 at 19:00hrs

Skål London, will celebrate our 80th birthday!

Programme and venue to be confirmed. **Put this date in your diary!**

SKÅL LONDON SPRING LUNCHEON

Thursday 23 April 2015, 12:15 - 15:00

We are back at Westminster Kingsway Catering College

Programme, price, menu to be confirmed

Booking form and information on our web-site www.skallondon.co.uk

For further information and booking please contact:

Paul Hoskins, tel: 020- 7183 7788 / email: p.hoskins@tiscali.co.uk

Alison Partridge, tel: 020- 3015 8417 / email: alison@goinggardens.com

➡MEMBERSHIP – A huge welcome to our new members:

David Guigaz, Managing Director at Evasion Voyage. Email: dguigaz@evasion-voyage.com / www.evasion-voyage.com

Logan Lechumanan, CEO at Destination Master. Email: logan@destinationmaster.com / www.destinationmaster.com

Angela Day, CEO at **Affordable Car Hire**. Email: angeladay@affordablecarhire.com / **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

Steven Dow, European Director at Diamond Resorts International. Email: steven.dow@diamondresorts.com <http://www.destinationmaster.com/> / www.diamondresorts.com

➡MEMBERSHIP FEE - 2015

Just a gentle reminder how to save money!

Pay your membership fee for 2015 before the end of the year and we keep last year's fee frozen at £110:00. If you prefer to pay after 31/12 2014 it will be £125:00

We will be offering new members a fee of only £75 (and no joining fee), discount if you are living outside of London and cannot attend all our meetings and all new Young Skål will be free the first year

So no more excuses, get going – tell all your colleagues and friends in the travel trade about this golden opportunity to be member of the huge international SKÅL family.

Don't forget about our new Corporate **membership**:

£350:00 per company up to 4 members

The annual fee includes 1 (one) person to attend free of charge at all events and will be entitled to have their logo on SI London website and further special promotions.

➡DO YOU KNOW THE ORIGIN OF THE WORD "SKÅL"?

Back in the Middle Ages, Vikings were roaming Europe and kicking the crap out of people in their way. For about 500 years, the bogeyman would check his closet before he went to bed to make sure there weren't any Vikings in it.

At the end of each battle, Viking warriors would decapitate the king or leader of the tribe/army they had just crushed and that night would drink from his skull--spelled skoll— as a sign of respect for the fallen opponent. It was only then, Viking warriors believed, could an opponent who had fought bravely be allowed into Valhalla.

In battle, Vikings would urge each other forward by yelling "SKOLL" to one another.

By doing so, they were telling each other to keep it up so they could drink from the skull of the Conquered that night.

(we have the connection SKOLL (english skull) to SKÅL (Swedish) meaning Bowl, to drink from).

A skål is a Scandinavian toast of friendship and goodwill that may be offered when drinking, sitting down to eat, or at a formal event. Like other toasts, a skål implies a wish for good fortune and good health, and it carries very friendly undertone.

There are a number of different ways to say it, series of individual toasts in which everyone toasts everyone else, taking a sip of a drink with each toast, As one might imagine, in a series of individual toasts in which everyone salutes each person individually, one tends to become rather intoxicated by the end and a collective skål shouted out by a group of drinkers or diners. Can be very noisy

We have, in Sweden, a very strict etiquette on how to toast. Make sure you know all the small details before you enter you revenge rampage to Sweden

➡ **NATIONAL MEETING, SKÅL UK:**

Skål UK AGM will be on January 30th 2015 commencing 13.30hrs.

Hampton Inn Hotel, North Terminal Gatwick Airport.

A concessionary car parking fee of 10 pounds has been made with the hotel.

The Hampton Inn is situated within North Terminal arrivals and is well sign posted.

For those of you arriving by train there is a shuttle from South Terminal that runs every few minutes to North Terminal and takes 3 minutes. National Express stops at both South and North Terminal. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in January. Please let me know one week in advance the names of delegates and members who are attending.

For further information please contact: Lyn Snelgrove - SI UK Secretary: Email: lynsnelgrove@aol.com

Next **National Assembly** will take place 24th to 26th April 2015
Join us and let us know how you want to shape the future of Skål UK!

➡ **Photo Gallery:**

You are all welcome to contribute! It does not need to be a Skål event, it can be any event. Please send me your photos and let's make the Gallery so much more joyous all around.

➡ **Skål London FaceBook**

Did you know that you can find, on a weekly basis, interesting news from London Tourism & Travel on the **Skål London FaceBook**. So hurry, sign up/be a friend and ask your colleagues to do the same. Don't miss the good news!

Best regards,

Mats Wivesson

Secretary - Skål International London / United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)20 - 8487 3528 / Fax: +44 (0)20 - 8941 0854

Email: secretary@skallondon.co.uk

Web: www.skallondon.co.uk

Web: www.skalUK.org

Web: www.skal.org